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MATTERS THEATRIC.

Almost all theatre and opera goers are familiar with the play of the "Fools Revenge," in which Mr. Booth has appeared during the present week, in some form or another, either as the opera of "Rigoletto," the original French drama of "Le Roi S'Amore" or the version by Tom Taylor, being played at the Winter Garden. It is a dismal and disagreeable affair at best, the main incident is one that shocks our better feelings of humanity, while the hero, Bertuccio, is so repulsive a character, that even with his great wrongs, it is next to impossible to sympathize with him in the slightest degree. In addition to this Mr. Taylor has done his work clumsily, and the play up to the last act is uncommonly stupid and uninteresting; we have to wade through a cumbersome mass of incidents, which utterly fail in exciting a sensation of any sort, and it is not until the last grand scene that the spectator is inspired with either enthusiasm or satisfaction. This last scene, however, makes up to some extent for the earlier portions of the play, being highly wrought and intensely powerful in its workings up and climax.—Bertuccio, goaded by revenge, has led the Duke to the house of his enemy Malatesta, and holds the ladder, while his master mounts and abducts, as he supposes, the wife of the grandee; by an unforeseen issue of accidents this proves to be his daughter, Fiordelisa, and it is not until she is safely in the clutches of the lustful Duke that the unhappy father discovers that he has assisted in the ruin of his own daughter instead of his enemy's wife.—Fiordelisa is locked in the chamber of the Duke, where, with a few congenial spirits he is celebrating with mirth and laughter his victory, and Bertuccio, having discovered his error, rushes to the door and demands admittance, he is refused, and is forced to stand without and listen to the ribaldry and scornful laughter of the lords within.

This, it will be seen, is a most powerfully tragic incident, and Mr. Taylor, one of the most experienced and practical of modern playwrights, has seized upon it with avidity, working up every point to the highest possible pitch of intensity, elaborating with dreadful earnestness the agony of the father, and in short, making a scene which for intensity of passion and power of dramatic situation is almost unparalleled in the annals of the modern stage.

Mr. Booth's Bertuccio is to my fancy, the gentleman's finest personation—from beginning to end it is one great masterpiece of art. Bertuccio's life is one continual falsehood, he apes the fool to assist him in the great end of his life—revenge,—and like Brutus of old, cares but little for the scoffs and revilings of his fellow men so long as he attains the object in view. Mr. Booth, taking this conception, carries it most wonderfully—his quips and cranks, his merry jokes, and biting sarcasms, his exaggerated walk, his antic and awkward postures in presence of the dissolute lords, are all admirable and fully convey the idea of the author, while in the tender passages of the play, where, freed from the restraint of the court, he seeks comfort and consolation in the arms of his fair daughter, he displays a pathos and gentleness of manner which are exquisitely

touching and impressive. Here we have the despised jester in a truer, purer light; softened by the kind, loving words of his child he forgets for the nonce the wicked passion of his life, and beneath the warmth of her sunny, tender smile, becomes the affectionate and doting old father and longs for the time when, his great revenge accomplished, he may flee from the court and its debasing influences, and seeking shelter in her arms, may become a purer and a better man. This scene, as I have before said, is rendered with great tenderness and feeling by Mr. Booth, but it is in the last act that he o'ertops himself and gives us acting that in the memory of a majority of play-goers has seldom been surpassed. His first burst of triumph, when he hears the rounds of revelry from the adjoining chamber and imagines that Ginevra, the wife of Malatesta, is closeted with the unprincipled Duke and his associates, his rage upon being refused admittance to the banquet chamber, his joy when the incensed Duchess, goaded on by hate and disappointed love, poisons the wine, and then his abject agony and remorse when he learns from the lips of Aquilla that it is his daughter and not Ginevra who is closeted within, his vain and futile attempts to force an entrance, the well dissimulated buffoonery with which he endeavors to cajole the entering lords to gain for him admission and then the last great burst of passion when, unable to endure the torture and agony longer, he beats against the door and crying aloud with broken voice that the wine is poisoned, bids the lords come forth and save themselves, are simply grand and work the spectator up to a pitch of uncontrollable excitement and enthusiasm. The man has come forth in his true colors—not the cringing, frowning jester but the father, big with his own wrongs and those of his child, and towers above the pigmy lords with his parental tenderness and affection.

The entire performance is by all odds the most thoroughly artistic Mr. Booth has yet given us; there is more thought, more careful elaboration of detail in it, than has characterised any of his former efforts, and while every point has been worked up to the highest pitch of passionate and natural acting, there is still, in the stronger scenes, when, throwing aside his disguise, the Jester assumes his true character and standing, a degree of abandon and power which renders the performance one that comes as near to perfection as one can ever hope to see on the modern stage.

The management of the Winter Garden should, in justice to themselves and the public, pay more attention to the "mounting" of the plays there represented; it is a disgrace to any respectable theatre to put so uniformly well acted a play as the "Fool's Revenge" on the stage in the slipshod way in which it is presented at this establishment.

The Worrell Sisters commenced an engagement at the Broadway Theatre on Monday evening of this week, opening in "Out to Nurse" and Brough's burlesque of "Camalzaman and Badora," which was presented in good style, with entirely new scenery and rich and appropriate costumes. When these three young ladies last played in New York they gave great promise of future excellence, but they have hardly realized

the hopes then excited. At that time they were clever and amusing but amateurish, and this fault seems to have stuck to them. In the place of improvement it would appear that they are satisfied with the reputation already attained, and have made little or no effort to perfect themselves in the art they have adopted. As very beautiful, piquant, and somewhat amusing actresses they may always attract notice, but as thorough artistes never.

SHUGGE.

MUSICAL GOSSIP.

London's New Philharmonic would appear to be in a thriving condition, for its "Hon. Sec." announces the commencement of their concerts next April, "in a new hall being built expressly for these concerts, entitled St. George's Hall, Langham Place, Regent Street."

The Sacred Harmonic Society of London are congratulated in their annual report upon having made £375 last year by their concerts, the receipts having been £5838 and the expenses £5463. That society was established in 1832 by a small body of amateurs for the practice chiefly of Handel's choruses and gradually assumed enlarged proportions. In 1846 a radical reform was made in its working machinery, and Mr. Surman its conductor from the commencement, gave place to another deemed more competent, but set up an opposition called The London Sacred Harmonic, which had a troubled and rather brief existence. Costa took hold of the original society in 1848 with such vigorous hand that new life was given it and ever since it has prospered remarkably. A critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette* praises highly the choral and orchestral performance of "Elijah" by that society last month, but excepts strongly to all the soloists but Santley, and even he, although conceded to be as perfect in the music of the Prophet, as a fine voice, unerring intonation, faultless accent, and steady phrasing can be, when combined with a marked absence of light and shade which is always a slight drawback to the effect of his singing—in so long and arduous a part as that of "Elijah," creates a certain sense of monotony. Tom Hohler is badly cut up by that critic both in the oratorios referred to and "The Messiah," while Mme. Sherrington is denied the mental gift or physical force requisite in some portions of the soprano part of "Elijah."

Gye has engaged Contogni, a baritone from Bologna, who is said to be a sterling singer, although his voice is not remarkable for power, and Petit, who did Mephistophiles at Le Lyrique very well, and since that has made a hit at Barcelona's Liceo, as "Assur." He also has secured Verdi's "Don Carlos" and Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet."

Mapleson has reengaged Tom Hohler.

Santley was announced to make his last appearance in oratorio at Exter Hall with the National Choral Society in "The Creation" for January 3d, thereafter making a three month's tour.

When Sims Reeves appeared in the second performance of "The Messiah," by the Sacred Harmonic Society, this season, he received a most enthusiastic greeting and his singing was so expressive, refined and masterly as to give additional emphasis to unanimous and hearty praise of England's "only tenor."

A critic in the London *Musical World* speaks of the second performance at Crystal Palace of Alexander's "Feast" in this wise: "Of the principal vocalists—Mme. Sherrington, Wilbye Cooper and Lewis Thomas—with the orchestra, I can speak in terms of unqualified praise but cannot say as much for the chorus, their singing being not only coarse and unsteady, but at times so palpably out of tune and time that the merest tyro in music could not possibly overlook their

shortcomings." He considers their voices exceptional in quality and sufficient in number, only requiring careful teaching and steady regular practice, to effect that competence for the task undertaken which they do not evince at present. His prescription of careful teaching and steady regular practice is far more easily made than carried into practical effect by directors of volunteer choral associations. Even Manns cannot do it.

The same critic declares that so fine performance of Beethoven's 2d Symphony and Mendelssohn's overture to "Melusine" as was given at the Crystal Palace concert of December 22d, has seldom if ever been witnessed—a finer would scarcely be possible. He considered Gounod's *cantique*, "Noel," exceedingly feeble and common place, gives the chorus another hard rap for misdeeds in Macferreri's "Christmas" cantata and commends Louisa Pyne's rendering of Schira's "Sognai," a very beautiful air, he thinks.

Arditi's second musical soiree had a fashionable and distinguished company who enjoyed his musical bill of fare very much. Piatti and wife, Strauss, Agretti, Emilia Ardit, Foli, Mme. Agliati, Caravoglia and Mlle. Zuliani, giving it good effect. His "extremely pretty new ballad, admirably sung by Foli, was encored and Emilia Ardit's violin playing greatly admired.

The *Musical World's* Parisian correspondence, as usual, gives spicy gossip about musical affairs in that gay metropolis. He writes in confirmation of several correspondents that Adelina Patti's absence from Les Italiens worked a serious loss to Bagier, as it stopped the remarkable success for Rigoletto, produced chiefly through her intense acting and exquisite singing. He avers in contradiction of some Parisian critics, that Adina—Elisire d'Amore—is the very best of all her comic delineations, the most perfected, sauciest, spirituelle and vivacious, and that assertion is made in full remembrance of her Rossina and Norina Saffi turned out a failure and poor La Grue reaped little or no honors in its performance. He does not think "Der Freischütz" at Le Lyrique, "the great success which is generally reported, for no one would dream of comparing the performance with that of "Her Majesty's Theatre," although much more has been done in the *mise en scene*. Mme. Carvalho, he says in urging his dictum, "shines in upholstery."

He can hear little about Gounod's "Romeo et Juliet" but affirms that "Don Carlos" is being rehearsed with full orchestra. Those who have heard the music are enraptured with it and one or two whose opinions he holds at a high rate, assure him that Verdi's new opera is likely to rival "Un Ballo in Maschera" and "Rigoletto." If so, he thinks it will be a grand coup for L'Academie—another "Africaine"—in fact. He remarks of Laura Harris that she appeared in L'Athenes concert with very great success for the "rondo finale" from "La Sonnambula," getting an uproarious encore. Her voice is not powerful, he remarks, but is wonderfully brilliant and telling, revelling in the compass of its upper register like that of De Murska or Nilsson. She sings remarkably well in tune, has capital accent with a good deal of expression. If she remains in Paris he doubts not she will be one of the concert season stars. He avers that Bateman is seeking Liszt to engage him for a Northern and Southern concert tour.

Louis Napoleon and Eugenie honored L'Academie last month with their august presence, to witness two acts of "Alceste," and the new ballet of "La Source." They were so well pleased as to give several indications for applause.

On dit, after January 14th, that establishment will give six performances each week. Mlle. Bloch has attained great success there in Fide's "Le Phrophe," and Mlle. Mauduit with Villaret received a real ovation for their performance in "La Juive."

The French Government recently granted

pensions to parties engaged in l'Opera, varying from 900 to 3,000 francs per annum, for their long and valuable services rendered.

A banquet was given by the parties who got up "le Voyage en Chine," after its 100th representation, to all concerned in performing it at l'Opera Comique.

Some critics in Paris deem Annetta—"Crispino"—to be Adelina Patti's very best role, because it requires neither deep sentiment or expression, and takes exact measure of her organization. Those writers do not appreciate her Adina—"L'Elisir d'Amore"—so favorably, as they prefer Donizetti's scoring for that role to Maurice Strakosch's inventions to suit her vocal exploits and fantastic ideas.

"Der Freischütz" is asserted to be a great financial success by some Parisian journals, who declare all the seats at Le Lyrique to be engaged ahead extensively. Others doubt.

The Vienna *Gazette* asserts for Berlioz's opera, "la Damnation de Faust," a success unexampled in that city's musical records. A perfect hurricane of applause hailed that grand work there when performed with rare attainment of excellence in all departments.

E. Reyer, a first prize composition man, and withal a smart litterateur, has been commissioned to write a grand work for L'Academie on a poem by Dulocle.

Theodore Ritter, a pianist highly estimated in Paris, excited a furore recently at L'Athenes, by his pianism, while Padeloup's grand orchestra received censure for not accommodating their production of tone artistically, to a great change of locality from le Cirque, in which they usually develop all possible sound to overcome its vast area with tone.

Perrin's opera, "Giuditta," was produced at Malaga with great success on Aldighieri's benefit night.

Assertion is made by Vienna correspondence that in Berlioz's opera the grand choral force sang with amazing unity and force. The orchestra was grand indeed and played admirably. Mlle. Bettelheim had credit for great beauty of voice, and Watte made a hit as Faust. So very ecstatic are some of these correspondents about Faust's "Damnation," that cool readers are disposed to question their sanity and competency to pass deliberate judgment upon it. There was, it seems, a congress of musical cognoscenti convoked at Vienna to witness the performance of Berlioz's grand opera.

Prince Czartoryski gave a grand fete to honor not only that fantastic composer, but all the musical *elite* convened to witness its production. There seems to be a mooted question connected with that affair. Was Vienna conquered by it after strenuous objection to Berlioz's music, or not. Authorities differ widely in regard to it.

Perrin, who manages L'Academie, has engaged a young tenor from le Conservatoire who succeeded well on his debut at Marseilles.

Moreno, after severe trial with sore throat, recovered so far as to proceed with study of his part in "Don Carlos," just as despair seized upon all who looked upon him as their only hope for its chief tenor role.

Adelina Patti has been honored with dedication of six melodies, written by Nina de Callias, on words by Mery, Theo. de Banville, A. Housage, H. de Callias and E. des Essarts. Of course she was overjoyed.

Mme. Ugalde recently appeared in Les Fantaisies Parisiennes in a new role—that of composer. This operette is called "la Hatte au Moulin," and she is principal therein.

"Don Carlos" appeared for the first time at L'Academie on January 15th, if previous announcements became a reality.

Two new singers are spoken of at l'Opera Comique—Mlle. Lambel, first prize at le Conservatoire, and Maillart.

Mme. Bedogni has been re-engaged at Le Lyrique. In that opera "Der Freischütz" runs

better, even, than "Figaro's Marriage" did some time since.

Prince Poniatowski's new Mass had full rehearsal before he quitted Paris for the season.

Two young composers—Colin and Theo. de Lajarte—have got up a Mass for the Orpheon and military band, beside pupils of a military school to aid in the chorals.

Viardot-Garcia created a furore at Strasbourg's first classical soiree of this season, by her performing airs from Titus and Alceste in her grandest style.

Mlle. Bettelheim is reported as singing in a concert at Vienna, a ravishing morceau from an opera by Mozart, unknown to that city—Il curioso indiscreto.

Franz Liszt recently changed his abode from Monte-Mario to Santi Francesco Romano cloister, amid the ruins of the old Roman Forum—for seclusion.

Prussia's warlike king has renewed his subscription for a box at the Victoria Theatre—three years more, at the rate of 1,500 thalers yearly.

The International Theatre now building in the Champ de Mars will be run day and night during the great exhibition, opera included.

Strauss' Album for 1867 is highly praised, not only for its musical gems but the style of getting up. Three waltzes, two polkas and one polka-mazourka there contained are especially admired.

Leonard and his wife had great estimation at Brug's "Reunion Musicale," during its first concert.

"L'Africaine" conquered another city—Temeswar—on its first appearance there, with Mlles. Kirchberger and Golpe, and Messrs. Milachefski and Rossi as her principal interpreters.

In a recent performance of that all conquering opera at Berlin's Royal Opera, credit was given to Niemann for surpassing Wachtel in the first act, his transcending excellence receiving acclamation from all present. In the fourth act, however, he was adjudged inferior to his rival in emotion and splendor of voice to enforce its expression.

At the Frederick William Theatre an operetta in one act, called "Franz Schubert," had favorable reception, as its author had made a clever pasticcio from that composer's melodic gems.

Munich's theatrical intendant general enforces that decree for string quartets to fill up entr'actes, making a general levy on musicians to write them up.

Il Trovatore—Milan—enumerates an extensive list of new operas performed in L'Italia Una last year, nearly all of which died when first produced.

Pacini went recently from Naples to Venice for preparation of a new opera called "Don Diego di Mendoza."

A new opera by Serrao, called "La Duchessa di Guisa," is claimed to have obtained great success at San Carlo last month, he being called out repeatedly, and six morceaux adjudged very beautiful, while a duet sung by Palmieri and Stigelli was imperiously encored. The *mise en scene* was bad, and so the music had all the honors.

At Rome's Argentina opera last month, three morceaux from a new opera by Therese Seneke, its overture, a cavatina for contralto and duet for soprano and contralto were performed on the nights of Mmes. Lanzi and Dory, with signal favor awarded by that public to both music and the author. She is a somewhat celebrated pianist. The opera is entitled, "I due Amici."

Herbeck obtained in a concert given by him at Vienna, a real success for a symphony written by him.

Abert's new opera, "Astorga," having triumphed over many severe German publics, will this summer be admitted to Parisian favor in Le Lyrique.

Viennese dilettanti gave Berlioz a banquet to